

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from April 12, 2007
Issaquah Fish Hatchery
Issaquah**

Commissioners Present: Nancy Hutto, Bob Tidball, Ben Kodama, Bob Vos, Larry Pickering, Grant Davidson, Judy Taylor, Michael Blakely, Ward Roney, Ewing Stringfellow, George Irwin, Julie Haakenson, Roger Calhoon

Commissioners Absent: Lu Eng, Robert Holland, Ewing Stringfellow

Staff: Steve Evans, Judy Herring, Jason Lindahl, Claire Dyckman, King County (KC) Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Agriculture Programs

Guest Agency Staff: Annmarie Magnochi, King Conservation District (KCD);

Guests: Ted Andrews, President of HerbCo; Anne Mack, PLAN; Marguerite Sutherland, PLAN

Nancy Hutto called the meeting to order.

Roundabout: George Irwin sold a bunch of steers, and has a hog sale this Sunday. If you want hogs, talk to him. Bob Tidball has a good looking stand of berries coming up; Judy Taylor will have sheep at the state fair, is opening a store. Hopes to have a U-Pick and yarn. Bob continues overseeing his herd. Roger Calhoon's ground drying out a week later... he will have a lot to catch up on.

Decisions Made:

Motion: George Irwin moved and Larry Pickering seconded that the Commission add the following items to the list of items to be addressed related to flood response in the Snoqualmie: allow needed agricultural structures to be placed on critter pads – this is part of supporting 'value-added' in addition to basic viability; examine the flooding caused by increased impervious surfaces in the basin and by the tight lines to the river. Motion passed.

Recommendations:

- Ag staff or landowners should explore the structural requirements will apply to structures on top of livestock sanctuaries if they were allowed: seismic, how to determine the integrity of the pad, etc.
- The ag team should try to extend the property and house value research to areas outside the APD's and should split out land-value from the current study.

Public Comment: None.

Presentations

HerbCo: Ted Andrews, President of HerbCo, described a thriving Snoqualmie agricultural venture that in 15 years has grown into a national presence with \$8,000,000 in sales last year. They formed a partnership in order to get up to size rapidly in order to be able to sell in stores.

Ted noted that the dairies have left the valley and we now have a variety of niche businesses coming into the valley to use the wonderful soil. They have inherited the dairy infrastructure and have to make it work. Unlike the dairies, they are each unique in their needs and cannot easily aggregate their interests for political power. They have to use the Commission. His niche is both growing and packing and they need to pack on site. They have a quarter of a million invested in packing machinery that, in addition to repairs, would have to be sterilized if the river water contacts it. This last flood they lost \$80,000 in supplies because the river came up quickly. He stated that it is idiotic to have these critter pad structures left in the valley that no one can use, and would like Ag Commission support for buildings on the critter pads. That would take addressing FEMA and DDES. He understands there should be no residents, condos, industrial or commercial venues. Simply the infrastructure needed by current agriculture. He would like a 10,000 sq. ft. packing facility and a cooler.

Many questions were asked by commissioners or issues raised:

- Are critter pads considered impervious surface? (non-tillable, not impervious)
- What is the flood dwell time? (4 days)
- Are the pads connected to other high ground ?(yes)
- They need structures on flood pads to protect poultry and livestock.
- Will buildings on critter pads be considered structurally sound?

Property and House Values in the APD: Jason Lindahl who has worked with the Ag team for nine months, presented his research findings on trends in farm values, based on looking at purchase prices in the Agricultural Production Districts. Discussion ensued on the relationship of this data to the proposed changes in the FPP covenants; the 10 year vision for agriculture; the need to extend this analysis outside the APD; and the task of separating land value from home value.

Staff Report: Judy and Steve announced upcoming regulatory, program, and Snoqualmie flood sub-committee meetings.

Agency Reports:

King Conservation District (KCD) Anne Marie Magnochi introduced herself as the new farm planner for the Snoqualmie, and announced:

- The district will be hiring a new grants person and a new farm planner.
- The Safe Grass Workshop would be on April 20th and 21st.
- The state legislature may fund a Farmland Preservation program and office.

Nancy Hutto adjourned the meeting.